

THE COMPLETE ALTAR SERVER GUIDE



THE LITURGICAL VESTMENTS

*Discover the Vestments Worn at the Altar
and Their Liturgical Meaning*



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ALB

From the Latin *alba*, meaning "white." A long white linen vestment covering the entire body, worn by both the priest and the Altar Server. It symbolizes baptismal purity and the grace of God clothing the servant of the altar.



CASSOCK

From the Latin *vestis talaris*, meaning "garment reaching to the ankles." A long vestment, traditionally black or red, worn by the clergy and the Altar Server beneath the Surplice. It represents renunciation of the world and total consecration to the service of God.



SURPLICE

From the Latin *superpelliceum*. A short white vestment with wide sleeves that the Altar Server wears over the red or black Cassock. It is the visible sign of his active and immediate service at liturgical celebrations.



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CHASUBLE

From the Latin *casula*, meaning "little house." The outer vestment worn by the priest during Mass, whose color changes according to the liturgical season. It is the most visible garment of the celebrant and symbolizes the charity that must cover all the virtues of the pastor.



STOLE

From the Greek *stolē*, meaning "garment" or "apparel." A long band of fabric worn over the shoulders by priests, hanging straight down in front, and worn crosswise by deacons. It is the symbol of priestly authority and sacramental power received at ordination.



HUMERAL VEIL

From the Latin *humeral*, meaning "of the shoulders." A rectangular cloth worn over the shoulders to hold the Monstrance or the Ciborium during Eucharistic Benediction and processions, serving as a sign of deep reverence before the Body of Christ.



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DALMATIC

From the Latin *dalmatica*, originating from Dalmatia. A liturgical vestment proper to the deacon, with wide sleeves and a straight cut, whose color varies according to the liturgical season. It symbolizes the joy of service and the charity shown in assisting the priest and the faithful.



CINCTURE

From the Latin *cingulum*, meaning "belt." A long cord used to tie the Alb around the waist of the priest or the Altar Server. It symbolizes purity, chastity, and spiritual readiness to serve actively at the altar.



COPE

From the Latin *pluviale*, meaning "rain cloak." A long semicircular cloak worn by the priest during solemn celebrations outside of Mass, such as processions, benedictions, and vespers. It is the most majestic vestment of the Roman liturgy.



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WHITE

A symbol of purity, joy, and glory. It is used during the most important feasts of the liturgical year: Christmas, Easter, Corpus Christi, feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of saints who were not martyrs. It expresses the light and holiness of the Risen Christ.



RED

A symbol of the fire of the Holy Spirit and the blood of the martyrs. It is used on Pentecost, feasts of the Apostles and martyrs, and during the celebrations of the Lord's Passion on Palm Sunday and Good Friday.



GREEN

A symbol of hope and life. It is the color of Ordinary Time, the longest period of the liturgical year, during which the Church lives and grows in faith, celebrating the daily mystery of Christ.



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VIOLET

A symbol of penance, conversion, and spiritual preparation. It is used during Advent and Lent, the two great seasons of preparation in the liturgical year. It calls the faithful to recollection, prayer, and conversion of heart toward God.



ROSE

A symbol of joy in the midst of penance. It is used on only two occasions of the year: the Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) and the Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday), as a sign that the feast is drawing near.



BLACK

A symbol of mourning and prayer for the deceased. It may optionally be used at Requiem Masses and on the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (November 2nd). It expresses sorrow before death and hope in the resurrection.